WOMAN'S PAGE

MRS. BURNETT AND HER CLOTHES.

How This Authoress Expresses Her Moods in Her Surroundings.

New York, July 23.—Few writers are more sensitive to their environment than is Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, and whether in her Washington or London home, in hotel, summer cottage or on board ship she is always surrounded by an atmosphere of refined luxury. Call upon her within an hour or two after her arrival at a house where she is to remain for only a few days, and you will find that already rare bits of tapestry have been hung and pictures arranged; that numerous cushions comfortably disposed invite to rest, and that the omnipresence of new magazines and fresh flowers has put to flight the unwelcome sense of hotel splendor. Nor are her swathings the least salient feature of this necessary entourage. Gowns have always been with Mrs. Burnett a distinct expression of her mentality, and have been made to play no insignificant role in a harmonious whole. It is not so much what they may mean to others as their reflex influence upon herself.

Perhaps no character in her novels has so strong a flavor of Mrs. Burnett's personality as Bertha Amory in "Through One Administration," and one cannot have failed to observe the dominant note of Bertha's gowns throughout the story. Indeed, we find her one day confiding to her husband: "I am not really pretty or clever at all, and it has been the object of my life to prevent its being detected. * * * You know how particular I am about my gowns. Well, that is my secret. I haven't an attraction, really, but my gowns and my spirits and my speciousness. The solitary thing I do feel I have reason to pride myself on is that I am bold enough to adapt my gowns in such a way as to persuade you that I am physically responsible for the color and shape of them. You fancy you are pleased with me when you are simply pleased with some color of which I exist on the reflection or glow. In nine cases out of ten it is merely a matter of pale blue or pink and silk or crepe or cashmere."

And later, in one of her mocking moods, she says to Tredennis:

"Do you see how her sleeves fit? It was her sleeves which first attracted my attention. I saw them at a luncheon in New York, and they gave me new theories of life. When a woman can accomplish sleeves like those, society need ask nothing further of her. In moments of rashness and folly, I have occasionally been betrayed into being proud of my sleeves; but now I realize that the feeling was simply impious."

Mrs. Burnett was born with an pronounced an instinct for inventing gowns as inventing stories, and it developed at as early an age. There was never anything of the proverbial literary slouch about her. In her very poor days, as in those of her early successes, she made diligent use of her fingers as well as brains in the creation of pretty costumes. A curious proof of their effectiveness came to her but recently, when she was addressed as "Queen of Hearts" by one who had not seen her since she masqueraded in this costume when only seventeen years old.

She then lived in a little Southern town, where it was difficult to obtain anything desirable, even if one had money, and her means were exceedingly limited. On this particular occasion, however, with a simple bit of white muslin and a few sheets of gilt paper, she succeeded in making, as it appears, a never-to-be-forgotten impression. Over the skirt of her costume she had scattered myriads of little hearts, and for the remainder had ingeniously devised heart-shaped overskirt, short sleeves and bodice. She gilded her own little boots, and finding nothing that could be made to serve as a necklace, with infinite patience cut out tiny pasteboard hearts, which she pasted over with gilt paper and mounted on gold braid. A large, gilded heart shone resplendent in her red-brown hair, and in her hand she carried a gilded stick surmounted by a heart.

The young authoress really brought as great earnestness of purpose to the concocting of this unique little costume, which, by the way, won her the first prize, as to her next story for Peterson's Magazine, and doubtless viewed the result with equal satisfaction.

With the coming of affluence Mrs. Burnett did not cease to invent her gowns. Like Beau Brummel, she has her failures, which fact, however, is not a half bad thing for her friends, as she holds that a woman who wears a gown unbecoming to herself that might become some one else is guilty of a double crime; rather than so jeopardize her soul, she turns over the most expensive experiment to the first chance comer, to whom it belongs by divine right of fitness.

The carrying out of her designs is now, however, a matter of easy delegation, as she always retains a maid who is at the same time a skilled dressmaker, and who is kept constantly employed making, altering and remodeling, for Mrs. Burnett requires unlimited change of costume, never, indeed, wearing the same gown twice at the same place. Even at her own "at homes" she does not wish to appear twice alike throughout the season. She says simply that the thought of putting on the same frock over and over again tires her and takes away all sense of mental freshness. In each of her homes, therefore, she is obliged to devote a good-sized room to the exclusive keeping of her numerous toilets.

Mrs. Burnett, in her costumes, affects almost wholly long lines and soft fabrics, using quantities of crepe de chine, liberty silks, gauzes, brocades, etc. She is also extremely fond of lace, seldom being seen without garnishings of this delicate material in one form or another. Her underwear is always of the finest muslin, sumptuously trimmed with laces. Once when very ill she said quite pathetically to a friend who came to see her: "You may know how ill I have been when I tell you that I have been indifferent to my ribbons and laces." She has also a great liking for rare and beautiful furs. Indeed, so pronounced is her penchant for all soft and fluffy effects that it is responsible for the very name by which she is known among her intimate friends.

While at work Mrs. Burnett wears a pretty negligee, usually of India silk, that falls from the shoulder to the floor, entirely unconfined at the waist, and ends in a long train. These charming little confections abound in falls of lace, and are always of black, white or violet, as since the death of her eldest son Mrs. Burnett has never worn colors. She cares nothing whatever for jewelry, and though she has had many valuable and interesting pieces presented her, never wears anything in the way of ornament but a rather ugly moonstone ring given her several years ago by the daughter of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. The stone was never of pretty shape, and has now become almost lusterless, but nothing would induce Mrs. Burnett to be without it for a single day, so strong is her superstition regarding its influence upon the fates. It was given her just before the enormous success of "Fauntleroy," and during the only time she ever allowed it to be off her finger occurred the carriage accident which resulted in her long illness from a concussion of the brain. Most of her jewels have picturesque stories connected with them, that of a beautiful diamond ring which she possesses being indeed quite a thrilling tale, as the ring was given her in memory of having saved a man's life (while bathing at Long Branch) at considerable risk to her own.

"The Story" has been the dominant influence in Mrs. Burnett's life from the beginning, and she is never so happy as when trying to make some fairy story materialize in the life of a friend—even to the third and fourth generation. She has already laid the foundation for the most enchanting real fairy tale in the life of some far-away great-granddaughter. Eight years or more ago, just before receiving the cable telling her of her son's illness, Mrs. Burnett had been to Paris, and had a number of magnificent costumes made for the coming London season. They had hardly arrived at her London home before the tragic news came, and the splendid creations were destined never to be worn. In a cedar chest 600 years old they lie packed away at Portland place, stiff brocade and soft crepe in shades of pink, yellow, violet, blue, and ashes of roses, embroidered over with pearls, silk and gold. A beautiful opera cloak of yellow brocade, lined with heliotrope satin, and trimmed with white marabou, completes the fairy outfit, which will not see the light of day for another generation or two.

One may imagine with what interest some fair daughter of the twentieth century will open the old chest and listen to the sad story of how the light went out of her illustrious grandame's life, so that she never again cared for bright colors, and always wore her garbs of mourning.

In planning the denouement Mrs. Burnett's emotions are divided between her story-telling and maternal instinct. For the best interests of the story, this charming descendant must be very poor, and fall unexpectedly upon the old chest at some great crisis of her life, where clothes play an important part—as when do they not, for that matter?—yet how deliberately consign one's great granddaughter to poverty to serve even so picturesque a purpose?

THE NEW ELOCUTION.

What It Is Not and What It Is.

New York, July 23.—The decree has gone forth. Curfew shall not ring tonight. Every branch of education sooner or later comes under closer scrutiny. Elocution is taking its turn. Its very name has become odious to cultivated people. The elocutionist is conceived to be a person who rants, gesticulates violently, works himself into a tornado of ridiculous passion, and gives his efforts to cheap and foolish recitations that have no acquaintance with literature.

The elocutionist chooses "pieces" to "show off" his wonderful powers. He, therefore, has in his mental wallet selections that group themselves under such classes as "The Tear-laden Domestic," "The Low Life Realistic," "The Sporting Sensational," "The Homely Pathetic," "The Triumphant Tragic," "The Spasmodic Soul-Felt," "The Melodramatic Weird," "The Sniveling Religious" and "The Harrowing Sentimental."

He is able to depict imaginary horse and chariot races, stirring battles, soldier boys, scenes in the barber's shop, young ladies learning to skate, a rustic relation's visit to town and little girls' experiences in hotels. He can cry like a baby of two weeks, he can sing like a bobolink, he can weep tears over an imaginary lock of Washington's hair, he can sing "Home, Sweet Home" as he sinks to death below the billows of the heaving main, he can mount the belfry and swing out above the town at the sunset hour, he can give in dialect the wit and wisdom of Mr. Socrates Snooks, and he can let down his back hair, like Miss Henrietta Petowker in "Nicholas Nickleby," and do "The Drinker's Burial."

Reading is a high form of histrionic art and it has suffered too long. A new movement is taking place among the professional readers and teachers of elocution. They prefer the term, the true elocution to that of the new elocution. They eschew mechanical rules, cultivate the mind and emotions, and the result is natural expression. "Learn the author," they say, "and you can then interpret him: study life around you and you will comprehend emotion, quicken the imagination and you can touch your audience."

One of the leaders of this movement and one of the best exponents of this natural method is Mr. S. H. Clark, of the University of Chicago. He holds the highest standards for the selection of literature and the highest aims for its interpretation. In his public readings he shows that the artistic reader is the actor away from all accessories of costume and scenery, depending entirely upon his voice, individual imagination and personal magnetism to produce illusions and effects upon the minds and emotions of his audience. His great axiom is: "If the thought is right the expression will be right," and conversely, "If the expression is wrong the thought has been wrong." Into his work and the methods that he and the other exponents of the new teaching advocate many intellectual qualities and much technical training are involved. A good general education and high intelligence is first required as a basis. As the good reader must be an interpreter of the author he must have a certain amount of critical perception; must understand the exact shade and meaning of every word; must have a clear, elegant and distinguished pronunciation, and must develop his musical sense strongly enough to feel the rhythm in prose and poetry. Again, he must pay attention to the posture of the body and stand before his audience with quiet ease, grace and self-command.

With regard to this point, Mr. Thomas C. Trueblood, of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who has just been elected president of the national association of Elocutionists, says: "I believe that the highest art in gesture is when our movements are not noticed. I say to my classes: 'I give you certain exercises; I wish you to practice them for grace and ease of bearing of body and movement of the hands and feet. When you get so your positions and gestures will not be noticed on the platform, then you have reached high art.' But the one who is forever constantly making movements of his hands and arms simply to get them going is doing something that detracts from his thought.'"

Cultivation of the speaking voice is just as necessary as cultivation of the singing voice, therefore many technical studies are necessary for the development of the reader's instrument. The art of breathing must be considered as a basis of tone production, and then follow the special exercises for carrying-power and pure quality. The hygiene of the vocal organs is a study by itself that is also insisted upon exactly as important to the reader as to the singer. Indeed, in many respects the teaching of the new elocution is similar to the methods in modern music.

The vast majority of people do not read aloud intelligently, even if they read intelligibly. They have no expression, no feeling, and do not use their voices properly. Consequently, few persons can read to a circle of friends sufficiently well to give pleasure. Their ear has had no critical training, their emotions never sympathize with the text and their voice is dull and monotonous. As good elocution has the advantage of being an elegant accomplishment and a marketable commodity, the following suggestions are offered to amateurs and beginners, who would like to follow the new and natural method, for the great point that this school makes is that intelligence is the best of all guides:

"With regard to the voice, speak neither too loud nor too low, nor too quickly nor too strongly. The key which you adopt must be governed according to circumstances; for instance, the size of the room and audience. Once determined, it must never be changed, although it may be necessary to raise or lower the voice at different passages. Judicious use must be made of punctuation. Pauses of different lengths—like rests in music—are determined by comma, semi-colon, colon and period. The great difficulty is proper emphasis. The kernel of the art of reading lies here.

"Emphasis is of two kinds; emphasis of sense, that determines the meaning, and emphasis of feeling, controlled by emotion. The intelligence depends on the former; the sentiment and beauty of the interpretation on the latter. Show animation and interest in what you are doing, but not too much radiant enthusiasm. This makes one ridiculous and undignified, and neither a circle of friends nor audience can be suddenly raised to that unnatural delight. Follow nature and avoid all exaggerations."

Anstey, in his amusing book, "Mr. Punch's Young Reciter," says: "On the platform everything is exaggerated, or it will be imperceived; your audience expect animation—even in the most trivial situations. Endeavor then to impart the utmost flexibility to your facial muscles; practice elevating each eyebrow independently of each other; roll your eyes until they work with perfect ease in their sockets, and train your lips to acquire elasticity of gutta-percha. For the nose a haughty expression of the nostrils will greatly aid the effect of a sneer. The ears should be left in repose. We have only seen one reciter who made points with these organs, and it seemed to us that this method involved a certain loss of dignity."

THE ROOF GARDEN GIRL.

HAS HER OWN ROOF GARDEN.

A Society Woman Who Entertains Her Friends.

"If you won't go to the roof garden, make the roof garden come to you." That is what one New York society woman said; and now she has her own little individual roof garden perched up on top of the southern wing of her town house, where gracious breezes come drifting across from river and sea, and aid the big punch bowl materially in its efforts to make the roof garden guests forget that there is a huge city, parched and sweating, below.

The society woman's private roof garden is not so brilliant and dazzling as the big public ones she does not take to patronize. It does not bloom with so many feverish bulbs of colored lights, but it is daintier, more inviting and cooler than the others, and it possesses the additional charm that its mistress may choose her own guests and her own "talent."

This is the second season of the little individual roof garden. Last year its owner and manager, who in winter time lives in a big brownstone house in the most aristocratic quarter, heard her masculine friends and relatives sing the praises of the roof gardens so frequently that she decided to investigate. The garden scheme itself impressed her favorably, but its environment was a trifle too boisterous, so she decided to improve upon it and have one to suit herself.

At the rear of her house a large wing has been added, which extends nearly through the block and reaches to the third story. On two sides it is inclosed by the walls of adjoining buildings, but the other two sides are unobstructed, and give fair play for all the zephyrs that may be hovering in the neighborhood. It was upon the roof of the wing that the future manager decided to build her roof garden. Work was begun on it without delay. First a doorway was cut through from a sleeping-room, which faced upon it. The door was concealed behind a light portiere of bamboo, a tiny lantern was swung from the casement, and the approach to the garden was complete.

Next a railing was built around the two exposed sides, and a light canvas awning in red and white stripes stretched from the roof of the adjoining house and supported by bamboo poles at the corners. A Japanese matting of Oriental pattern was used to hide the tin roof, and over it were scattered rich rugs from the drawing-room below.

The railings were hidden behind rows of palms and plants, and in and around them were swung as many quaint old lanterns as could be found in a search through Chinatown. Underneath the awning, suspended from wire strings, more Chinese lanterns and fairy lamps were hung, and under them were swung hammocks, draped with Bagdad rugs; in the cool, secluded corners were placed steamer chairs, covered with rare stuff that the roof garden manager had picked up abroad. The other furniture consisted of bamboo divans, where the guests might lazily flop down and congratulate themselves that they were there.

Pretty little tabourets, which might serve either as tea tables or for pipes and cigars, were brought out, and the whole was set off with a big, cool punch bowl in the center.

When the private roof garden was formally opened the neighbors marveled much. The top of the somber old wing, instead of losing itself in the darkness, was transformed into a dainty tea house in miniature, where lanterns blinked and waved invitingly and the jingle of the banjo was heard.

From the first the roof garden was a great success. Its manager made a "hit" with it, and an invitation to "drop up" for an evening was one of the things sought for by the poor city toilers, who were compelled to remain in town. When the hostess closed her house and went to her country place in Westchester, the decorations and appointments of the roof garden were not disturbed. Additional storm awnings were put up to shelter them from the rain, and when the manager returned to the city for a day's shopping the roof garden could be opened at an hour's notice. There she invites her friends to come and spend the evening, and any especially good artist who happened to be "doing the roof," was called in to "do" the private one. All in all, the guests found the entertainment quite as satisfactory as at the regular playhouses.

Since opening her garden a great addition has been made in a collection of posters plastered over the bare walls of the adjoining houses. This collection is one of the best in New York, and includes specimens of nearly all the renowned poster artists. Between the windows of the back wall shields and armor have been placed; and this roof garden, if the improvements continue, will soon rival in richness those from which the society woman first got her inspiration.

Deader Than Anywhere.

"Anyone who believes that the word 'dead' cannot be compared ought to visit Toronto on Sunday," remarked a drummer the other day. "I've seen dead towns before, but Toronto is the deadest on the map. Any one who is sidetracked in that town over Sunday can do nothing but grow.

"I slipped $1 into the hand of the clerk of the biggest hotel in Toronto one Sunday afternoon recently and said: 'I'm so dry that I'm afraid I'll crumble into dust and blow away. If you know any way by which I can be moistened so that I will hold together till I get out of town, I wish you would point it out. There is a bar connected with the hotel on week days, isn't there? If anyone calls to see me I shall be in my room for the next hour.' Then I went to my room and waited.

"By and by there was a timid knock on the door and the clerk entered. He appeared badly frightened and kept glancing about apprehensively all the while. He carried an old valise, which he thrust into my hands, exclaiming in aloud voice: 'Beg pardon, sir, but you have left this in the office.' Then he added sotto voce: 'Throw it under the bed out of sight after you're through with it.'

"A drowning man would not have grasped a plank more eagerly than I grabbed the old valise. I thrust another dollar into the clerk's hand, pushed him out of the room, sat down on the bed and opened the thing. It contained two bottles of pop. My subsequent remarks are reserved for revision before printing."—Chicago Times-Herald.

THE QUAINT OLD ART OF PAPER CUTTING.

The quaint old accomplishment of paper cutting has become almost a lost art, except where it is still remembered by a few old ladies as having been fashionable when they were young. Perhaps some of them can still take a piece of paper and a pair of scissors and cut out designs, but their hands are too old and tremulous to execute as delicate and complex patterns as they used to make.

The designs for these cut papers were never drawn, but the paper was generally doubled so that the pattern, when unfolded, was duplex, giving a certain regularity.

The girls of fifty years ago became very skillful at this work, and one lady tells of often seeing her old mother, as the family sat talking after dinner, draw out a pair of small scissors, pick up any envelope or bit of paper, and, seemingly without any thought or trouble, cut out the most exquisite flowers and arabesques.

Cut papers were used for many purposes of decoration. Sometimes they were cut with a ring at one end that slipped over a candle, the leaf of delicate paper lace hanging down in front of the candlestick harden, had almost the look of exquisitely like an apron. These "candle papers," when dipped in melted wax and then allowed to carved ivory.

Sometimes the papers were cut in rounds to fit into the lids of watches, and were presented by young ladies to the gentlemen of their acquaintance, and the young men of that day counted their popularity by the number of watch papers that they received.

Young ladies exchanged cut papers with each other as tokens of friendship, and these, shaped like hearts, ovals or envelopes, were often further embellished by delicately painted wreaths and flowers, and by the sentimental verses of the day written upon a space left for them.

Sometimes the cut papers were merely considered as works of art, and as such were mounted on black haircloth and framed. No paste was used in the mounting, as the papers were too delicate, and besides it would have yellowed them. The edges were simply smothed out with a soft brush, and the glass put over them to hold them in place.

These large cut papers were often done in memory of some one loved and lost, and the center would be cut in the shape of a funeral urn and tablet. Upon this tablet might appear some verse, the letters cut out with a sharp penknife after the rest was finished. A favorite one was:

Now to the wind let all my sighs be given,
And reach—tho' lost on earth—the ear of heav'n.

Then would follow the date, and perhaps the words, "Beloved, tho' Lost."

The only branch of this art that still seems to be well known is that of silhouettes, but this requires much more talent than the others, for the power of catching a likeness is comparatively rare.

The most elaborate silhouettes had the eyes and hair afterward touched in with white or gold paint. The silhouettes themselves were generally black, but there are some examples left where the profile was cut out in white and laid on black.

About fifty years ago a little dwarf, Miss Hunnywell, made herself quite famous as a professional paper cutter, and it was considered "the thing" among the young gentlemen of that day to have a watch paper cut by Miss Hunnywell.

The manner of her cutting was very ingenious, for she had neither hands nor feet. On her right shoulder was something like a thumb, on her left side something that might pass for a hand with two fingers, and with these and her mouth she managed to cut out the most exquisite designs and lace with marvelous rapidity.

Her work was so much in demand, not only for its beauty, but because of its being somewhat of a curiosity, that the dwarf, traveling from place to place, and exhibiting herself and her work, earned quite a little fortune. It was enough to make her a mark for a rogue, who married her, and then ran away with her money, leaving her penniless.

It is said that after he deserted her the little dwarf would never cut papers again, and died in an absolute state of penury.

There was a certain Mistress Dolly Nicholas, of Petersburg, who was quite wonderful at this art of paper cutting, and her drawing-room was decorated with a whole series of pictures from Mazeppa, wild horses and all, which she cut out without the aid of pencil or any guide but her own fancy.

But this art goes further back than the time of Miss Hunnywell or Mistress Nicholas. It is some time early in 1760 that Mrs. Delany, in her "Autobiography and Correspondence," writes of her closet at the farm as "decorated with little drawings and cut papers of my own doing."

Later on, when speaking of a young Mr. Twyford, who was deeply in love with her, she says:

"His mother's cruel treatment of him, and absolute refusal of her consent for his marrying me, affected him so deeply as to throw him into the palsy. He lived in this wretched state about a year after my marriage. After he was dead they found under his pillow a cut-paper that he had stolen out of my closet at the Farm."

When Mrs. Delany was over seventy years old she made her first attempt at copying flowers in cut paper.

Her manner of doing it was thus described: "Having a piece of Chinese paper on the table of a bright scarlet, a geranium caught her eye of a similar color, and, taking her scissors, she amused herself in cutting out each flower by her eye in the paper. She laid the paper petals on a black background, and was so pleased with the effect that she proceeded to cut out the calyx, stalks and leaves in shades of green, and pasted them down, and after she completed a sprig of geranium in this way the Duchess of Portland came in and exclaimed, 'What are you doing with that geranium?' having taken the paper imitation for the real flower."

This was the beginning of the collection of cut-paper flowers, which, before her death, numbered 980 sheets, each one different.

That wonderful collection has disappeared now, as has Mistress Nicholas' wonderful Mazeppa series. Only here and there do we come upon a cut-paper laid away in some old portfolio or writing-desk, or see it hanging, framed, on the wall of some old-fashioned room; and the young ladies of today find it more convenient to send a booklet or a printed card to their friends, instead of the more personal tokens that used to be exchanged in the old days of cut-papers.

The Frog and the Terrapin.

A game dealer has of late had a lot of terrapin and a large number of frogs in the same tank, and it has been funny to see the frogs pile on the terrapins' backs, whether to get their feet out of the wet or to enjoy a ride is not known. Yesterday the tank was partly filled with water and a huge sea turtle was placed in it. At once the terrapin crawled on the back of the turtle, and the frogs followed and climbed on the terrapin, and the whole outfit sailed around as gay as a picnic party. One old frog that had succeeded in reaching the highest point began to croak exultantly and seemed to be saying: "More room at the top; more room at the top."—Portland Oregonian.